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Racism: a global analysis

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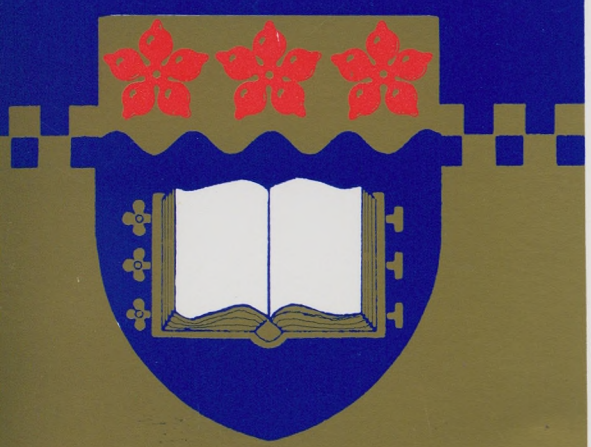
Racism cannot be seen in isolation: it is often linked to forms of oppression based on sexism, religious persecution, political conflict, economic exploitation or international conflict. Anti-racist strategies must therefore be based on the principles of universality and indivisibility of human rights.

The increasing incidence of racism in many areas is linked to current rapid changes in global economic, political and cultural relations, which have led to crises in political institutions, employment, social structures, culture and national identity. Such crises express themselves in insecurity and disorientation for some groups, and in increasing levels of violence.

This analysis indicates the need for a multi-faceted approach to combating racism. This should include: • First, fundamental economic and social policies designed to achieve social justice, security and the best possible life-chances for the whole population. • Second, governments should introduce specific anti-racist legislation, policies and agencies. • Third, there is a major role for active work by non-governmental organisations, and • Fourth, there is a need for close cooperation between government agencies and non-governmental organisations.



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I. Introduction

Racism has long been a serious problem in many societies. It has been the subject of political action, government intervention and social-scientific research. Obviously, practical strategies to deal with racism are the crucial issue. But racism is not a simple or static phenomenon: it arises in differing situations, takes many forms and varies in intensity according to time and place. It is important to carry out research to understand the nature of the beast, if we are to improve our methods of combating it. The task of this paper is to provide general background information, to set the scene for discussion of strategies for reducing and eliminating racism.

That is a very large task, which cannot be done effectively in a single paper. The introductory summary presented here is inevitably superficial. But the attempt to provide a global context may be useful to those doing more specific research. The paper begins with a definition, followed by a brief look at the history of racism, and an overview of the incidence and types of racism around the world at the beginning of the 1990s. This is followed by a discussion of some social-scientific explanations, and the different types of responses by governments and societies are mentioned. Finally, I present a summation of the central issues which arise in working out anti-racist strategies.

Let me begin by foreshadowing my most important—and most disturbing—conclusion: after a period of relative decline in some areas, racism is on the increase in many parts of the world today. It is taking on the most serious forms, which are threatening not only to minorities, but also to the very fabric of society. The causes of this trend are manifold, but are essentially linked to rapid processes of economic and political restructuring, which often take place without adequate consideration of their social and cultural consequences.

II. Defining Racism

The definition of racism adopted for this paper is:

> ... the process whereby social groups categorise other groups as different or inferior, on the basis of phenotypical or cultural markers, or national origin. This process involves the use of economic, social or political power, and generally has the purpose of legitimating exploitation or exclusion of the group so defined.

To present a definition of racism is not simply an academic exercise. It is an essential precondition for research, as well as for devising legislation and policies to eliminate racism. The salient point to identify racism is that membership or exclusion from a group is based on *phenotype* (physical appearance such as skin colour or features), *national origin* or *culture* (as demonstrated by dress, language, customs or religion). Racists believe that they can predict people's character, intelligence and behaviour on the basis of their phenotype, national origin or culture. Concentration on phenotype alone is inappropriate, because there are many historical and contemporary cases of white-on-white or black-on-black racism.

Racism generally involves the use of economic, social and political power by one group to discriminate against other groups, in order to maintain its own power, to control the other groups and often to exploit their labour. The dominant group constructs ideologies of the inherent difference and the inferiority of the dominated groups. The power of the dominant group is sustained by developing structures (such as laws, policies and administrative practices) that exclude or discriminate the dominated group. This type of racism is generally known as *institutional racism*. More spontaneous types of prejudice or discrimination arising out of a racist culture are generally known as *informal racism*.

Racism takes many forms, ranging in intensity, which make up a continuum. Acceptance of even the apparently milder forms can pave the way for the more violent ones. The forms include:

- prejudiced attitudes
- discrimination:
  - in legal status
  - employment
  - housing
  - eligibility for services
  - access to public places
- verbal or written abuse
- incitement to hatred, discrimination or violence
- harassment designed to intimidate or insult
- physical violence
- genocide.

All these practices may be seen as forms of violence, in the broad sense proposed by the Norwegian peace-researcher Johan Galtung (1988: 281-2), which may be summarised as follows:

> Violence should be taken to include any practices, whether carried out by individuals, social groups or institutions, which restrict the freedom or self-realisation of human beings, and which are based on the ultimate threat of physical harm.

In other words, all forms of racism are, essentially, forms of violence, for they reduce people's life chances, and are ultimately based on the threat of physical harm.

III. Historical Background

Since ancient times, groups of people have come into contact with each other through trade, migration or warfare. This has given rise to notions of group boundaries, marked by area of origin, language, culture, physical appearance or other characteristics. Non-belonging to a specific group was frequently used as a criterion for discrimination or hostility. Practices akin to modern racism played a part in processes of territorial expansion, in which one ethnic group subjugated others, occupying their land and exploiting their labour.

However, systematic ideas of 'race', in which phenotypical characteristics (skin colour, physical features) are taken as predictors of social characteristics or behaviour, appear to be fairly recent. They arose through European colonialism: from the 15th century onwards, religiously inspired views on the barbarity and inferiority of the indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia and America were used to legitimate invasion, genocide, slavery and exploitation. In the 18th and 19th centuries, attempts were made to justify racism on the basis of scientific theory. Races were seen as biologically distinct entities, made up of people with different phenotypical characteristics. They were thought to form an unchanging hierarchy, in which the capacities and achievements of the members of each 'race' were fixed by natural determinants. Domination by the 'superior race' was inevitable and desirable, because it was thought to lead to human progress (Miles, 1989; Husband, 1982).

Within Europe, racial categorisation was crucial in the rise of nationalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, forming a central element in the ideology of many nation-states. During the Industrial Revolution, racism against white immigrant workers (such as the Irish in Britain or the Poles in Germany) had much in common with racism against non-European immigrants over half a century later. The attempt to base membership of a nation-state on membership of a specific 'race' or ethnic group is highly problematic, since all peoples are the result of historical processes of migration and intermingling. Taken to a logical

conclusion, this ideology requires policies to exclude members of other 'races' or to deprive them of rights. The German Nazis went to this extreme, defining the Jews and Gypsies, who had been part of German society for centuries, as aliens and physically destroying them. It is important to remember that this most extreme form of racism was carried out by one white group against others, showing that skin colour is not always a crucial marker.

After the defeat of fascism in 1945, there was considerable debate about the legitimacy of the concept of 'race'. UNESCO convened a series of symposia to debate the issue. Their statements demonstrated the invalidity of racial classifications in the terms of both the natural and social sciences (Montagu 1964, 1972 and 1974). A *'race'* is not a biologically-defined group, but a social construction arising out of *racism.*

Action against racism became a declared aim of the international community, laid down in a multitude of resolutions and conventions. However, at the same time, racist policies and practices continued unabated in many areas. European powers continued to cling to their colonies and oppress their peoples; Australia maintained its White Australia Policy; minorities such as Afro-Americans in the USA were victims of racist violence and discrimination; indigenous peoples in settler colonies were deprived of rights; and immigrant groups entering highly-developed countries encountered institutional and informal discrimination.

It was above all the movements of oppressed peoples from the 1950s to the 1970s that—for a while at least—caused a decline of racism. Anti-colonial and national liberation movements in the Third World achieved decolonisation and the end of white domination over non-European peoples. The Civil Rights Movement and the uprisings of urban ghetto dwellers forced major changes in US law and policies, leading to legislation on equal opportunities, affirmative action and measures to combat racism. In Australia, the need to improve relations with the post-colonial Asia-Pacific region as well as popular revulsion against racism led to the end of the White Australia Policy and to the granting of citizenship to Aboriginal people. In Europe, struggles by immigrant groups led to gradual improvements in legislation and measures to combat discrimination.

None of these trends was without ambiguity. Political independence for colonies was often accompanied by new forms of economic dependence on the rich countries and transnational corporations. Improvements in the legal status of black people in the USA were not matched by economic and social progress. Australian Aborigines found that gaining citizenship did little to alleviate the lack of economic and political power resulting

from two centuries of oppression. In Europe, improvements in the rights of resident immigrants were often accompanied by restrictive measures against new immigration. Nonetheless, the period of the 1960s and 1970s was one of growing public awareness of the evils of racism and of some real progress in the struggle to eliminate discrimination. As we shall see in the next section, these advances were not always sustained in the following period.

IV. Incidence and Types of Racism in the 1990s

In this overview, we will examine the situation continent by continent. It is not possible to present comprehensive data or detailed accounts. Rather, the emphasis will be on describing specific types of racism and presenting some examples. It should be noted that the demarcation line between racism and other types of oppression is often unclear. Many situations combine elements of racism, sexism, religious persecution, political conflict, economic exploitation or international disputes. This section is based on a variety of sources, which will be cited in the text. It is impossible for the author to verify details or to carry out exhaustive research on each case, so the account should be seen as indicative rather than definitive.[1]

Australasia

Australia and New Zealand both developed as white settler colonies with strong racist traditions. The suppression and dispossession of indigenous peoples played a central role in nation-building and the emergence of national myths. This went furthest in Australia, where some Aboriginal tribes were decimated, while nearly all were driven from their land. The term genocide is not too strong to describe what happened. Right up to the 1930s, the prevailing ideology in Australia was that Aboriginal people could not compete with the 'superior' white population and would 'die out'. From the 1930s a policy of assimilation was followed, which meant paternalistic control by a special bureaucracy and deliberate destruction of Aboriginal culture through indoctrination in 'white ways' at mission schools and settlements. As late as the 1960s, Aboriginal children were taken away from their parents to be brought up by white families.

It was not until 1967 that the Australian people voted in a referendum to grant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the right to citizenship in their own country. Prior to that, they were not even counted in the Census! The legacy of nearly 200 years of oppression is a situation of socio-economic marginalisation, marked by poor education, very high unemployment, bad health, low life expectancy and lack of economic and

political power. Since 1967 there have been attempts by governments to improve the social and economic position of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

However, such efforts have for the most part stopped short of measures which would empower them to take control of their own communities, for instance through granting the key Aboriginal demand for land rights. Moreover, institutional discrimination persists. The recent Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody examined reasons for the high rate of incarceration of Aboriginal people (29 times as high as the rest of the population!) and proposed a series of measures to improve the situation. The Report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) *National Inquiry into Racist Violence in Australia* (HREOC, 1991: 61-135) documented widespread violence against Aboriginal people, and found that violence by police officers was a major problem.

In New Zealand, the Maori people were deprived of their land and other resources by British colonists. Maoris put up considerable military resistance to white domination, and resisted destruction of their communities and culture. The Treaty of Waitangi between Maori leaders and early colonists laid down important rights (for instance on land ownership and fishing) for indigenous people. Although these rights were often ignored in practice, they did help lay the basis for a better legal situation later on. Maoris make up a larger proportion of the New Zealand population (9 per cent) than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia (2 per cent). The socio-economic marginalisation of Maori people remains severe, but has never reached the almost total dispossession typical of Australia. In the 1970s and 1980s a new ethnic consciousness emerged among Maoris, leading to cultural and political mobilisation. The state responded with measures of administrative decentralisation which helped empower Maori communities in the management of their own affairs (Spoonley, 1988).

Nineteenth century Australian racism was directed against all non-British immigrants, but particularly against Asians and Pacific Islanders. One of the first acts of the new Federal Parliament in 1901 was to introduce the White Australia Policy, which was to bar non-European immigration until the 1960s. The European immigrants who came to Australia after the Second World War experienced considerable hostility and discrimination. However, Australia's geopolitical position was changing and so were popular attitudes. Asian immigration started in the 1970s through entries of Indo-Chinese refugees. Today Asian countries make up 8 of the top 10 countries of origin for new immigrants. Since the 1970s, Australia has officially considered itself a multicultural society, and successive

governments have introduced measures to improve the situation of minorities and to combat racism.

Nonetheless racism is still a problem in Australia. Opinion polls have demonstrated considerable hostility to some ethnic groups, particularly people from Asia and the Middle East and there is evidence of discrimination in hiring and promotion. Members of certain groups (such as Vietnamese and Lebanese) suffer considerable socio-economic disadvantage, as shown by high rates of unemployment and low socio-economic status. The 1991 HREOC inquiry into racist violence (HREOC, 1991: 137-80) investigated 'racist violence on the basis of ethnic identity', and discovered evidence of racist intimidation, harassment and violence, particularly against Asian or Arab Australians. It also found cases of attacks on new arrivals from Central and South America, as well as anti-semitic incidents. Hostility to European immigrants was reported to have declined. The Inquiry found that the general level of violence against ethnic minorities was not high (unlike the situation for Aborigines), but still declared that changes to laws, institutions and community attitudes were needed to prevent a future resurgence of racism.

Thus we can conclude that racism in Australasia is primarily directed against indigenous peoples, and is particularly severe in Australia. Institutional violence by the police and other people in authority is a special problem. Non-European immigrants in Australia also frequently experience racism, though usually not in such extreme forms.

Africa

Colonialism re-shaped already complex patterns of inter-ethnic relations throughout the African continent. European domination shifted economic activity and trade to the coastal areas, leading to urban growth and migratory movements, which have persisted since independence. The colonial powers carved out new administrative entities with no regard for existing ethnic or territorial boundaries. Many states include several ethnic groups, while members of a specific ethnic group may be citizens of two or more adjoining states. A further legacy of colonialism was the introduction of minority groups such as Lebanese and Indians, who became economically successful but vulnerable minorities. Decolonisation and the formation of new nation-states has frequently involved domination, discrimination or exclusion of minorities. Migrant labour systems and refugee situations have also contained elements of racism. This applies in different ways in many countries (Castles and Miller, 1993: 140-3; Ricca, 1990).

In settler colonies, white minorities have tried to maintain their power through institutionalised race-class systems, which exclude black majority populations from

economic and political participation. By the beginning of the 1990s, the only remaining country in this category was the Republic of South Africa, and even here change was coming fast. Apartheid is being dismantled, but many forms of racism still exist for the black majority: exclusion from political participation and civil rights, oppression by police and other state agencies, discrimination at work, in housing, in access to public places, and severe socio-economic disadvantage. In the current process of transition, other ethnic conflicts have emerged, such as those between Zulus organised in the Inkatha Party and members of other ethnic groups. Such conflicts cannot be divorced from the colonial tradition of 'divide-and-rule', which played off one oppressed group against another. For many years, South Africa's racist policies have caused destabilisation and civil war throughout Southern Africa, most recently in Mozambique and Angola.

Discriminatory practices by dominant ethnic groups exist in many countries, frequently coming to a head at times of internal or international conflict. For instance, the recent civil war in Liberia was linked to conflicts which have their roots in historical divisions between the Americo-Liberians (descendants of slaves who returned to Africa from the USA) and the ethnic groups of the interior. The Americo-Liberians dominated government and public employment prior to the army coup led by Sergeant Doe in 1980. This was seen as a take-over by the interior tribes. However, Doe's own tribe, the Krahn, dominated government, leading to political fragmentation along ethnic lines. In the civil war, all sides carried out brutal practices, including torture, rape and murder, against members of other tribes (US DoS, 1991: 200; US DoS, 1992: 207). Ethnic or tribal divisions, often complicated further by religious and economic differences, have played a part in many recent conflicts, including the long war in Ethiopia and Eritrea, the current struggles in Somalia and Sudan (US DoS, 1992: 410) and the 1989 violence in Mauritania (US DoS, 1992: 388). In the northern part of the continent, historical divisions between peoples of Arabic origin and black Africans often play a part.

Violent internal or international conflicts often lead to mass refugee flows, either within a country or across national borders. By the end of the 1980s, there were estimated to be 5 million refugees in Africa (Ricca, 1990: 220). Apart from the insecurity and deprivation inherent in being forced to flee their home-areas, refugees often experience discrimination and other forms of racism in the places where they seek refuge.

Discrimination against members of minority ethnic groups is reported from many African countries (see US DoS, 1992 for examples). In many cases ruling groups use their tribe as a power base, leading to privileges for its members and disadvantage for non-members. Political struggles then generally take on ethnic aspects, so that a change in

government may lead to replacement of the dominant ethnic group. Denial of civil rights or other forms of discrimination has also affected members of Asian minorities in Uganda, Malawi, Kenya and Tanzania. There is no space for more detail here. However, it should be emphasised that *ethnicity* should not necessarily be seen as a causal factor in itself. Conflicts which express themselves through racism are often the result of complex historical, economic or political factors, which need to be analysed in detail in each case.

Migrant labour systems were often a major element of colonialism. The South African mine labour recruitment system is still based on the colonial model. Migrant workers are recruited both from so-called 'homelands' and from other African countries. They are poorly paid, insecure and subject to draconian forms of control. In other parts of Africa, the contrast between economic growth in certain areas and stagnation in others has led to vast movements of workers, sometimes through official recruitment, but often spontaneously and even illegally. Migrant workers generally lack civil, political and social rights, and are subject to economic exploitation, discrimination and harassment, and arbitrary deportation.

The most extreme case was the expulsion of as many as two million workers from other African countries by Nigeria in 1983 and 1985. Tens of thousands of Senegalese migrants have had to flee violence in Mauritania, while many Mauritanians had to leave Senegal in 1989 (Fritscher, 1989). Large numbers of Zairians were expelled from Congo in 1991 (Noble, 1991). Libya has a migrant labour force of 1.5 million compared with 1.1 national workers. The migrants lack the protection of labour law and are subject to arbitrary pressures, such as changes in work rules and contracts. In 1991, the Libyan Government rounded up and deported thousands of workers from Chad, Nigeria, Mali and Ghana, with little or no warning. It is alleged that some were detained and mistreated (US DoS, 1992: 1500).

To sum up, ethnic conflicts and racism are of considerable significance throughout Africa, and appear to be gaining in strength in the current period of economic and political turmoil. Many instances of racism are linked to past colonial practices, but there are also new forms, connected with nation-state formation, labour migration and refugee movements. There are many cases in which the state itself is the perpetrator of racist practices and human rights abuses. White racism against other ethnic groups still exists, while whites—due to their economic and political power—rarely find themselves victims of racism. But racism cannot be reduced to a white-black phenomenon: racist practices are to be found between all ethnic groups.

America

From 1492 the New World was constructed through colonialism, dispossession of indigenous peoples, import of slaves and indentured workers and mass intercontinental migration. The result was a great complexity of ethnic relations, marked by intermingling of peoples, colour-class systems, racial exploitation and resistance struggles. No brief summary can even begin to do justice to the reality.

In the Southern Cone of Latin America (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay) the majority of the population is of immigrant origin. Many indigenous people have been marginalised and exploited. In Brazil, the Indians of the Amazon have in recent years suffered from encroachments by ranchers and prospectors. In many cases their land has been taken, and there have been many reports of violence against Indians, as well as of epidemics caused by diseases introduced by colonists. In the past, the government has not provided adequate protection to indigenous peoples, and police have sometimes helped drive Indians from their land. However, the situation appears to be improving at present (US DoS, 1991: 530; US DoS, 1992: 518-9).

In the Andean area and Central America, the populations consist mainly of Indians and mestizos (people of mixed European and Indian background). Discrimination against indigenous peoples is a widespread problem. Often the rural-peasant population is of Indian or mestizo origin, while the urban population is of European immigrant background. Class and power relations therefore have strong ethnic aspects. In Guatemala indigenous people are largely excluded from the dominant culture, language and economy. Rural indigenous men are reported to be frequently forcibly drafted into the army or into guerilla forces. There have been many cases of serious human rights abuses, including massacres, of indigenous people (US DoS, 1992: 620). Discrimination against indigenous people is also reported from Ecuador (US DoS, 1992: 588). In Venezuela it is reported that many indigenous people live in isolation and lack access to educational and medical facilities. Representatives of the Warao people complained in 1991 of diversion of water from their land by a government development organisation, and of beatings by personnel of the National Guard (US DoS, 1992: 768).

Black populations—generally descendant of slaves—are also still victims of racism. Brazil has a large black population (40-60 per cent of the total), many of whom are socio-economically disadvantaged. Few blacks rise to high positions in the public service, the armed forces or the private sector. Black organisations have denounced discrimination in housing, education, the workplace and society at large. They also allege that blacks are frequently victims of police brutality. Most victims of violence, including murder, are

black (US DoS, 1991: 530; US DoS, 1992: 518-9). Discrimination against black people in various Central America countries and in Ecuador is also reported (US DoS, 1992: 588).

In the Caribbean countries, and some areas of northern Latin America such as Guyana, black people form the majority. The indigenous populations of these countries were in many cases wiped out by colonialism. White settlement and introduction of slaves from Africa and, later, indentured workers from the Indian sub-continent have led to complex colour-class systems. In the period of decolonisation these have been at the root of various types of racism and inter-ethnic conflict. The situation has been complicated further by US military and economic involvement in many areas, and by growing migrant labour movements to Europe in the 1950s and 1960s, and to the USA and Canada more recently.

Within Latin America there are large-scale labour migrations, frequently coupled to various types of racism and exploitation (for overviews see Lattes and de Lattes, 1991; Castles and Miller, 1993: 148-52). Perhaps the most notorious was the employment of Haitian seasonal workers for the Dominican sugar harvest. The government of the Dominican Republic made an annual payment to the Haitian government for provision of thousands of workers, who laboured in appalling conditions described by the London-based Anti-Slavery Society as slavery. In 1991, the Dominican government ordered a mass expulsion of Haitians. Many of the 10,000 people expelled were long-standing residents in the Dominican Republic, or had even been born there (French, 1991). This mass deportation contributed to the destabilisation of the Haitian economy, and in turn to the mass outflow of asylum-seekers to the USA.

In Latin America it is very hard to distinguish clearly between racism against minorities, political instability and economic deprivation as causes of oppression and deprivation. Many recent refugee movements have aspects of all these causes. For instance, in the 1980s about 2 million central Americans were uprooted, mainly Guatamalans, Salvadorans and Nicaraguans. Many headed north to the USA, where they were to experience new forms of discrimination.

Let us turn now to North America. Both the USA and Canada originated in settler colonies, based on dispossession of indigenous peoples. In the USA, the destruction of Native American societies is very much part of the myth of nation-building and also a key element in the widespread glorification of violence. In both countries, indigenous people's movements since the 1960s have led to some changes in consciousness and

policies. Canada, in particular, has moved towards the granting of land rights to some First Nation Peoples. However, most Native Americans (0.8 per cent of US population) and Native Canadians (2 per cent of total Canadian population) remain socio-economically marginalised and lacking in political power.

About 12 per cent of the US population are Afro-Americans. Despite improvements in legislation and setting up of government agencies to combat discrimination following the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, racism against Afro-Americans remains a major problem. Most blacks have segregated housing situations, and distinctions between whites and blacks in income, occupational status, unemployment rates, social conditions and education are still extreme. Although a minority of Afro-Americans have succeeded in attaining middle-class positions in the last few decades, the gulf between most blacks and the white population is as great as ever.

Racist violence is also a severe problem. In 1988, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith (ADL), pointed to the existence of at least 67 active 'hate organisations'. The largest was the Ku Klux Klan, with 5,000 members, which carries out systematic campaigns of violence and intimidation against blacks. The ADL Report (ADL, 1988) lists large numbers of racially-motivated attacks by whites on blacks, as well as anti-semitic incidents, anti-Asian outbursts and attacks on other minorities. Many of the assaults involved the use of fire-arms, bombs or incendiary devices, leading to deaths and serious injuries. Even more widespread than organised racist violence are local incidents of harassment, racist abuse, beatings, vandalism and abuse. In the late 1980s an increase in racist attacks on college campuses was reported (Sowell, 1989).

In 1990, the US Congress passed the *Hate Crimes Statistics Act,* which should in future provide a system of national monitoring of racist violence. But even in the absence of exact data, there is no doubt of the prevalence of racism. In 1983, the US Commission on Civil Rights concluded that 'the phenomenon of racial and religious violence is a serious threat to the maintenance of a peaceful, democratic and pluralist society' (US Commission on Civil Rights, 1983: 27). The continuing truth of that statement was spectacularly demonstrated by the Los Angeles riots of 1992, which erupted in response to police violence against a black man.

The USA and Canada have always been countries of immigration. Racist practices against European immigrants were widespread during the mass immigrations before 1914. Entry rules were often discriminatory, favouring British and northern European immigrants and excluding non-Europeans and people from southern and eastern Europe.

Immigrants encountered discrimination and exploitation, but most did become citizens and achieve some upward mobility in the long run. In the 1960s, both the USA and Canada abolished discriminatory rules, leading to large-scale entries from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Non-European immigrants have encountered considerable racism. One form this takes is the exploitation of illegal workers from Mexico and other Latin American countries by US employers, especially in agriculture. Such workers were systematically recruited and forced to accept wages and conditions far below normal rates, often displacing Afro-American workers who were unwilling to work for so little. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act seems not to have fundamentally changed this situation, often forcing illegal workers into even more disadvantaged positions. Not all Latin Americans come illegally, however. For instance the large Cuban refugee population has been relatively successful in economic terms. Nonetheless, the fear of mass Latino immigration is a major factor in US politics, leading for instance to President Bush's decision to order the US Coast Guard to turn back Haitian refugee boats—arguably a violation of human rights and refugee conventions. Most Asian immigrants come legally and many have secure legal status as refugees, or relatives of refugees. Others come to the USA with high skill levels. Their economic situation is therefore often better than that of illegal Latin American workers. Nonetheless, Asians frequently report racial harassment and attacks.

It is hard to summarise the many types of racism encountered in the Americas. Certainly, there is no doubt about the high incidence of discrimination, exclusion and violence against indigenous peoples, black people, migrant workers and other minorities in various countries. As in Africa, the colonialist roots of many types of racism are apparent. However, forms of racism are changing in response to economic, political and cultural change. Again, we find that white people are rarely victims of racism, but that racism is practised against minorities by powerful groups of varying ethnic origins.

Asia

The Asian continent, which is home to half the world's people, is marked by enormous geographical, cultural, political and economic differences. Nonetheless we can observe some common features and tendencies. As in Africa, European colonialism led to forced labour, compulsory population movements, urbanisation and migration, which all gave rise to new situations of ethnic relations. In colonised countries, 'race' and skin colour took on great significance, overlaying pre-existing patterns of religious, ethnic and social differentiation. In the period of decolonisation, new power structures incorporated and

transformed existing differences, while political change and economic development led to new forms of ethnic conflict and domination.

Struggles connected with nation-building have frequently led to oppression and discrimination against minorities. The violence at the time of Indian Partition is a case in point. Its legacy has been sporadic inter-communal violence within India (most recently in Bombay early in 1993) as well as international conflicts involving India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In such cases it is often impossible to distinguish clearly between ethnic, caste and religious factors. The long civil war in Sri Lanka is also linked to post-colonial nation-building. Tamils were subjected to systematic discrimination by the Sinhalese, which contributed to the insurrection in the mainly Tamil north of the country (US DoS, 1992: 1600). Many cases of oppression of national groups following territorial expansion or conquest by powerful states are to be found in Asia. The treatment of Tibetans by China and of East Timorese by Indonesia are just two examples.

The most recent examples of ethnic conflicts and racism connected with nation-building are to be found in the Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. The establishment of new states based on membership of specific ethnic groups has often meant discrimination against minorities. Some of these are in turn fighting for recognition of their rights, trying to establish their own states, or seeking to link up with other states in which their own ethnic group has power. In Azerbaijan, persecution of Armenians living in Baku and in the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh led to the outbreak of an all-out war with Armenia. In Georgia, the Ossetian minority and other groups claim that they have been victims of ethnic discrimination, which has caused armed confrontations. There have also been allegations of anti-semitism in Georgia. In several of the central Asian republics, such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan there has been discrimination against people of Russian ethnic background, causing many to leave (US DoS, 1992: 1284-8).

Most Asian countries have long-standing national minorities. For instance, the People's Republic of China has 55 designated ethnic minorities, making up 8 per cent of the total population. Most members of these groups are said to have living standards below the national average. Despite official policies to increase minority representation in government and the Communist Party, there appear to be few minority members in real power positions (US DoS, 1992: 827-8). In other Asian countries, minorities are categorised as 'tribal peoples' or 'hill tribes'. Such groups are to be found for instance in Bangladesh, India, Thailand and Vietnam. Minorities consisting of indigenous peoples overrun in the past by more powerful settler groups exist in Japan and Taiwan. All these

groups seem to experience some degree of socio-economic disadvantage and political exclusion. The situation varies from country to country, with policies to integrate the groups concerned in some places, and state toleration of discrimination in others. In India, for example, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989 increased penalties for offences against these groups. According to official figures there were 16,810 cases of atrocities (including murder, rape, burning and beating) against scheduled castes and tribes in 1990 (US DoS, 1992: 1402-3).

In other cases, minority problems are largely a legacy of colonialism. For example, the introduction of Indian and Chinese workers to Malaya by the British gave rise to economic and political competition. The Malaysian government has introduced a policy of preference for people of Malay ethnicity, which is regarded as discriminatory by some people of other ethnic backgrounds. The situation of people of Chinese origin in Indonesia has also given rise to conflicts: many Chinese were killed or persecuted following the 1965 military coup. Although matters have improved, there is still some hostility to people of Chinese origin.

About half the world's estimated 20 million refugees have their origins in Asia. The two largest movements were both directly connected with the Cold War, namely the exoduses from Indo-China following the Vietnam War (over 2 million people) and from Afghanistan (up to 6 million people). Although these movements were mainly due to political upheavals, they were often linked to ethnic conflicts as well. For instance, many of the refugees from Vietnam were ethnic Chinese, who suffered racism as well as political persecution. Other refugee movements with this dual character included those of Tibetans to India and Nepal, East Timorese to Australia and Portugal, and members of ethnic minority groups from Burma to Thailand and Bangladesh. Such refugees often also find themselves victims of racism while on the flight, or in their new country of refuge (NPC, 1991: 68-91).

Labour migration within Asia has grown enormously in the last 20 years and has frequently involved discrimination based on ethnic or national origin. The largest movement has been to the Arab oil states since 1973. Workers include other Arabs, such as Jordanians, Palestinians, Yemenis and Egyptians. Large numbers have also come from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand and South Korea. Most women workers come from the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea or Sri Lanka, while neither Pakistan nor Bangladesh send females abroad (Skeldon, 1992: 40-1). Migration to the Middle East takes place within discriminatory contract labour frameworks: workers are not allowed to settle nor bring in dependents, and lack civil and

political rights. They are often segregated in barracks. They can be deported for misconduct, and are often forced to work very long hours. Women domestic workers are frequently subjected to exploitation and sexual abuse.

During the occupation of Kuwait and the Gulf War in 1991-2, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers had to flee from Iraq and Kuwait. Some were killed or injured, and many lost all their earnings and possessions. Palestinian workers in Kuwait became embroiled in the conflict, with many initially supporting Iraq. After the War, some were killed or tortured, while many had to leave the country. The War and the exodus from Kuwait exacerbated tensions in the area, particularly in Jordan and Egypt, which had relied on labour migration to support their economies. At the same time, the oppression of Palestinians by Israel in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip led to increasing violence on both sides.

In recent years rapid economic growth and declining fertility have led to considerable demand for migrant labour in some Asian countries. In the 1980s, Japan admitted many women from Pakistan, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Korea to work as dancers, waitresses and hostesses (often a euphemism for prostitution). They were followed by men from the same countries, who worked—generally illegally—as factory or construction workers (Sekine, 1990). The Japanese Government is opposed to immigration, due to fears of overpopulation and concern to preserve ethnic homogeneity. In 1990 severe penalties for illegal foreign workers and their employers were introduced. However employment of unskilled foreigners of Japanese origin was permitted, leading to a scramble to recruit 'Japanese Brazilians'. Other ways of getting round the law are to employ 'trainees' from developing countries, or students of Japanese language schools who are permitted to work 20 hours per week. Such schools are often fronts for illegal labour recruitment. Today there are thought to be up to 300,000 illegal foreign workers in Japan. Their situation is marked by lack of rights and severe discrimination.

Singapore is heavily dependent on unskilled workers from Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. Unskilled workers have to rotate every few years and are not permitted to settle or to bring in their families. They are forbidden to marry Singaporeans and women have to undergo regular pregnancy tests. In 1989 there was an amnesty for illegal workers, after which a mandatory punishment of three months jail and three strokes of the cane was introduced. On the other hand, Singapore is eager to attract skilled and professional workers, particularly those of Chinese ethnicity from Hong Kong. They are encouraged to settle and quickly granted permanent residence status (Martin, 1991: 182-4; Skeldon, 1992: 44-6).

Other Asian countries with large foreign labour forces include Malaysia, Hong Kong and Taiwan (Stahl, 1990). The governments of Asian labour-importing countries believe that temporary labour migration can be controlled in such a way as to prevent permanent settlement. They therefore see no need for integration policies. The situation of low-skilled migrants in all these countries is marked by lack of civil and political rights and insecurity of residence status, which in my view amounts to a form of racism. It remains to be seen whether these countries will repeat the experience of labour-importing countries in Europe in the 1960s, which became countries of immigration without intending to.

In summary, it may be said that minority groups in many Asian countries suffer racism. Some types of ethnic conflict and domination have deep historical roots, while others developed in the colonial period. New types of racism have arisen in the course of post-colonial nation building processes, through conflicts connected with the Cold War, and through mass movements of workers and of refugees. There are many instances of racism imposed or tolerated by states. On the other hand, it is important to note the success of some new nations, such as Indonesia, in integrating many diverse ethnic groups into a single national community.

Europe

All European countries have long histories of ethnic interaction and conflict. The development of nationalism was often accompanied by chauvinism towards other nations, and racism towards minorities. Historical struggles between Christianity and Islam have left a legacy of prejudice against peoples from the Arab countries and north Africa. Anti-semitism has existed in many countries since the middle ages. From the 15th century, colonialism led to prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory behaviour towards non-European peoples. Thus there is a deeply entrenched culture of racism in many European countries. This expresses itself in conflicts on the status of territorial minorities (such as Basques in Spain or Corsicans in France) discrimination against historical minorities (like Jews and Gypsies), as well as in practices towards the new ethnic minorities which have arisen through recent immigration.

From 1945 to the early 1970s, Britain, France and the Netherlands permitted labour migration from former colonies, while nearly all western European countries recruited foreign workers in southern Europe, Turkey and north Africa. Most labour migration stopped with the onset of recession in the early 1970s, but family reunion continued. What were intended to be temporary movements of workers led to unplanned settlement and minority formation. Nearly all western European countries now have immigrant

groups making up 5-10 per cent of their populations. Between one third and half of these settlers are of non-European origin. The impact of the new minorities is all the greater due to their concentration in specific parts of major cities and industrial areas (Castles, 1984). In the 1980s, migration rose again, often taking the form of entries of asylum-seeker or illegal labour migration. Southern European countries such as Italy, Spain and Greece, which had previously been areas of emigration, now experienced labour entries from Africa and Asia.

Most western European countries have experienced community conflicts, and an increase in racism since the early 1970s (see European Parliament, 1985). Members of ethnic minorities suffer institutional and informal discrimination, as well as racist abuse and harassment. The most dramatic signs of growing tension were the increasing frequency of racist assaults, the rise of the extreme right, and a series of violent confrontations between ethnic minority youth and the police in Britain, France and Belgium in the 1980s. In France, the extreme-right Front National became a major political force, while similar organisations made big gains in the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark and Belgium, and gained representation in the European Parliament.

The situation got even worse at the beginning of the 1990s, as the end of Cold War coincided with a serious recession in most European countries. The fear of being 'swamped' by impoverished masses from the south and the east became a dominant political theme, and gave further impetus to extreme-right groups. In Germany there were outbreaks of violence against asylum-seekers and foreigners. The targets of aggression included asylum-seekers from Romania and Yugoslavia, black African workers, and Turkish residents. From mid-1990 to mid-1991 about 30 foreigners died as a result of racist violence (Nirumand, 1992: 7). According to official statements, 2,400 racist crimes were committed in 1991, four times as many as in the preceding year. This is certainly an understatement, as there is no systematic monitoring of racist offences in Germany (Farin and Seidel-Pielen, 1992: 42-3). Violence became even more acute in 1992, leading to a general climate of aggression, exclusion and discrimination against minorities.

For historical reasons, racism in Germany receives great attention, but matters are little different in other European countries. Levels of racist violence in Britain rose considerably in the 1980s (Home Office, 1989: Paragraphs 22-26) and continued to do so in the early 1990s. In France the anti-racist group SOS-Racisme has documented widespread racist violence, particularly by the police, against north Africans and blacks. In early April 1993, a series of police killings of immigrants led to violent confrontations.

Increasing racist violence and extreme-right mobilisation have been reported from traditionally tolerant countries like the Netherlands and Sweden (see Castles and Miller, 1993: Chapter 8 for an overview). Racist attacks were reported from southern Europe too. In Italy, regional separatist parties such as the Liga Lombarda spread anti-immigrant slogans. The European Parliament's Committee of Inquiry into Fascism and Racism in Europe (European Parliament, 1985: 101) came to the conclusion that 'immigrant communities... are daily subject to displays of distrust and hostility, to continuous discrimination...and in many cases, to racial violence, including murder'. The report showed how extreme right organisations openly organise violence against members of ethnic minorities, and attempt to recruit members of violent youth sub-cultures, such as skinheads or football hooligans.

Government and community responses to racism have varied considerably. In some countries—particularly Germany and Switzerland—it is difficult for immigrants to obtain naturalisation, and even children born to immigrant parents do not automatically become citizens. Permanent resident status is also hard to get in certain countries. In such cases, community conflicts are exacerbated by immigrants' weak legal status, and their insecurity about whether they can remain in the country. Moreover, anti-discrimination laws cannot be introduced or enforced where the state itself discriminates, for instance by giving preference in employment and social security to its own citizens and other European Community nationals.

In eastern and south-eastern Europe, the collapse of communist states has led to explosive ethnic conflicts based partly on long-suppressed historical disputes and partly on new problems arising from economic and political crisis (see Schierup, 1991). The current struggles in the ruins of the former Yugoslavia are too well-known to need rehearsing here. The extreme racism of 'ethnic cleansing' has evoked widespread horror. The failure of European countries and supranational bodies like the European Community and the United Nations to stop the fighting appears as a major setback to attempts to create a new global order after the Cold War. The response to the new refugee emergency has also been far from adequate, and the suspicion exists that some countries, such as Britain, have put restrictive immigration policies before humanitarian considerations. The conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia and other parts of former Yugoslavia show vividly that racism can present a major threat to democratic states and to the international community.

Other minority conflicts abound in the region. Over 350,000 Bulgarians of Turkish ethnicity fled to Turkey to escape persecution in 1989-90, though many returned once

repressive policies in Bulgaria ceased (Vasileva, 1992). Discrimination and violence against Gypsies in Romania have led to a large-scale exodus, mainly to Germany. People of Hungarian ethnicity in Romania has also reported persecution, and some have fled to Hungary. From the late 1980s, emigration of Jews from the area of the then Soviet Union increased. Ethnic Germans, Poles and Greeks also moved to their countries of ancestry, as travel restrictions were removed. It is not always possible to separate between fear of racism and economic motivations in these movements, but there is ample evidence that the political and economic unrest following the collapse of Soviet power has led to the emergence of nationalistic and anti-semitic movements, such as *Pamyat.*

In the former Soviet Union, over 60 million people lived outside their nationality's administrative region, which shows the enormous potential for conflict as new nation-states are established. For instance, in Moldova, the imposition of Romanian as the official language and other discriminatory measures led to secessionist movements of the Russian and Gaguaz minorities, and armed conflicts broke out in 1991. In Russia itself many ethnic minorities exist. Conflicts have arisen as groups deported under Stalin have sought to regain their old territories (US DoS, 1992: 1284-7; see also Brubaker, 1992). Many people have emigrated from the former Soviet Union in the last few years. For example thousands of Ukranians and Russians have taken up temporary work, generally illegally, in Polish agriculture and construction. Often they replace Polish workers who have moved westwards to Germany, where they make up a large proportion of building workers and domestic workers (Korcelli, 1992).

These examples illustrate that the whole region is in a state of flux. The more prosperous countries of the former Soviet bloc, Hungary, Poland and the Czech and Slovak Republics, have become countries of immigration and of transit. They are rapidly setting up institutional structures to deal with immigration and refugee inflows, and have made agreements with the Schengen Group of western European countries, designed to prevent illegal movements. Although there is no space for a detailed analysis here, it is clear that racism and ethnic discrimination is a major cause of the current migratory movements. At the same time, these migrations are leading to new forms of conflict and racism in the destination areas.

V. Explaining Racism

In order to effectively combat racism it is necessary to understand its causes. Research into racism has been a major theme of the social sciences. Unfortunately for policy-makers and practitioners, however, there are many schools of thought with differing conclusions (see Rex and Mason, 1986, for a good summary; see also Castles, 1990). I will give a very brief overview of the main approaches, and then go into more detail on some of the more important current discussions.

What do we require of a theory of racism? To be a useful guide to understanding and action, it needs to do the following:

1. Explain why racism exists in many different societies, both in the past and the present (*general causes of racism*).
2. Explain the varying forms of racism within any one society, as well as in different societies (*comparative analysis of the causes of racism*).
3. Explain why racism increases or decreases at certain times (*causes of changes in the incidence and character of racism*).
4. Provide ideas for strategies to combat racism.

Biology, human nature and common sense

Until 1945, theories of 'scientific racism', which purported to prove the biological superiority of the 'white race', were widespread. Some attempts have been made to revive 'scientific racism' since 1945 (Billig, 1979) but it is deeply discredited. However, in recent years a new approach—known as sociobiology—has emerged. This theory claims to be non-racist, because it is not based on ideas of racial hierarchy, and in some cases does not use the term 'race', preferring 'tribe' or 'ethnic group'. It asserts that all human groups are in principle equal, yet they are different and each must remain separate on its own territory (Barker, 1981; Rose et al, 1984)). Sociobiology, asserts that racial or ethnic conflict is inherent in *human nature* and therefore inevitable.

Ideas of this kind present a pseudo-scientific legitimation for racist attitudes. In countries where official policies are non-discriminatory, racist ideologies are rarely put forward in an overt way. The received ideas of racist culture are taken up indirectly in *commonsense notions*[2] about the inevitability of conflict and competition between different 'races'. Such notions are to be found in the speeches of politicians, in the mass media, and in popular discourse. Those who voice such ideas invariably claim to oppose racism, but

assert that they are expressing the 'legitimate fears' of 'ordinary people' who feel that they are being swamped by immigration, or that their culture is being overwhelmed by minorities. Yet speeches by such leaders have always been followed by racist attacks and demands for immigration control.

Ideas about 'race' based on biology or 'human nature' should thus be seen as *racist theories* rather than *theories of racism,* and have no value in the struggle against racism.

Psychological theories

Psychologists tend to deal with racist attitudes or behaviour as the result of individual pathology: people behave in a bigoted way because they are 'personally inadequate' or 'sick'. The target for aggression is more or less coincidental, since the cause lies in the personality of the aggressor. Psychological theories, which usually focus on *prejudice* rather than racism, were most influential from the 1930s to the 1960s (see Simpson and Yinger, 1985, for an overview). The essential feature is the emphasis on personality defects and the neglect of social structure. Such approaches come very close to blaming racism on human nature, and may lead to the fatalistic conclusion that there is very little that can be done to deal with it, since there will always be 'sick people'. Purely psychological approaches therefore provide little in the way of useful explanations for racism, nor much guidance in working out strategies to deal with it.

Nonetheless, there is an important role for psychological approaches to racism, if they set out to provide an understanding of the processes which mediate between social structures and individual behaviour. Psychology can help to answer questions such as: in a situation of urban stress or unemployment, why does one person react with racist behaviour, while another looks for more constructive solutions? Social psychology is important in helping to understand the group processes through which competition for resources, insecurity and racist ideology can lead to conflict. Above all, psychology can be useful in helping to devise educational and community work strategies to deal with racist attitudes and practices. Thus psychology can be an important component of inter-disciplinary approaches to racism.

Sociological theories

There is a wide range of sociological theories of racism and racial conflict. One of the most influential has been the functionalist *race relations approach,* first put forward by the 'Chicago School' in the 1920s. The basic concept is that of 'newcomers' entering a 'host society' which is assumed to be harmonious and homogeneous. The 'host society' has a

set of of generally-accepted values, norms and behavioural patterns, while the 'newcomers' bring a different set with them. The result is lack of communication, competition and conflict, leading to problems of 'race relations'. The solution is seen in the adaptation of the immigrants or minorities to the patterns of the majority, through a process of 'resocialisation'. The problem is thus not one of racism by the majority, but *maladaptation* by the minority—a classic strategy of blaming the victim. Such approaches have lost ground among social scientists, but they remain influential with policy-makers and provide support for 'commonsense' notions that 'immigrants must adapt to our way of life' or that 'maintenance of ethnic cultures leads to separatism and ghettoes'.

Since the 1960s, conflict-based approaches to understanding racism have gained ground. These emphasise the importance of social structure and institutions, and examine processes of racial and ethnic categorisation as potentially rational behaviour, designed to achieve social, economic or political goals. Sociological theories in the Weberian tradition concentrate on the use of 'social closure' by ethnic groups (i.e. exclusion of other groups) in an attempt to maximise market chances, or to obtain resources from the state. Such behaviour can include forms of group mobilisation based on non-rational criteria, such as phenotypical characteristics or cultural symbols (see Rex, 1986; Bell, 1975). This analysis is sometimes linked to an historical approach, which stresses the importance of colonialism in laying the basis for contemporary racism (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979).

Much recent sociological work analyses the construction of racial categories and their expression as racism as central aspects of the social structure of industrial societies. Racism is seen as a form of social inequality similar in character to, and closely linked with, class and gender distinctions. This approach has developed out of Marxist sociology, but embodies important elements of other approaches, particularly with regard to the significance of non-economic power relations, and the key role of culture and ideology. In contemporary societies, racism is seen as having two central roles:

1. Racism helps draw the ideological boundaries of inclusion and exclusion which are vital for the construction and maintenance of the nation state. At times of crisis, 'commonsense' ideas on 'race' help maintain national cohesion, by blaming the social problems on the immigrant 'enemy within'.
2. Racism (like sexism) is part of the process through which specific groups of people are allocated to positions in the processes of production and reproduction. Racist ideologies and structures help determine what types of jobs people get, and legitimate special forms of exploitation.

The main themes which have emerged from this approach in recent years are:

1. The question of the autonomy of racism from class relations;
2. The role of the state and political institutions in relation to racial and ethnic issues;
3. The impact of racism on the structure of the working class and dynamics of class struggle and political organisation; and,
4. The processes through which racist ideologies are produced and reproduced (Solomos, 1989: 18).

Current work on the issue of the autonomy of racism from class relations shows how both are articulated with each other in particular historical situations, in which it is necessary to understand not only economic structure, but also culture and ideology (Hall, 1980). Racist attitudes and behaviour may therefore persist long after the particular economic or political circumstances which gave rise to them have passed.

The role of the state in perpetuating racism has been analysed for colonial or overtly racist societies (like the Southern states of the USA before the 1960s or South Africa) but also with regard to contemporary advanced industrial societies, where special measures are used to control migrant labour. Contract labour systems (like the German guest workers) are examples of institutionalised racism. The use of racist stereotypes in politics, for instance in Britain, France and Australia, is also significant (see CCCS, 1982; Barker, 1981; Castles, 1984). Racism is used—consciously or unconsciously—for political ends, such as strengthening national feeling or mobilising support for a particular party.

The impact of racism on the working class, and therefore on political struggles in general, has also been a major theme. One argument is that racism splits the working class, reducing its cohesion both in industrial struggles and in politics (Phizacklea and Miles, 1980). In other cases, institutional forms of discrimination which disenfranchise large parts of the working class also reduce its political power (Castles and Kosack, 1985). Racial conflict within the working class has been a major theme in US sociology. In Australia the best examination of this issue is to be found in Lever-Tracy and Quinlan (1988). An important aspect of this issue is the relationship between racism and sexism for migrant and minority women (Phizacklea, 1983).

It is important to analyse the development of racist ideology, and how it has influenced popular culture. This cannot be simply reduced to an issue of economic interests. For instance, the rational core of hostility directed against Chinese immigrants in 19th century Australia was fear that they would compete for jobs, or undercut wages. But why did this become transmuted into racist ideologies on the inferiority and aggressiveness of the

Asian immigrants? This can only be understood through analysis of the history, culture and social situation of Australian workers at the time in question.

At this point the sociological study of ideology begins to link up with psychological research on personality development and group consciousness. In a given set of historical and social conditions, different individuals and groups react in different ways. Knowledge of social structures alone does not permit prediction of individual behaviour. We need to link sociological explanations based on structure and institutions with psychological theories of personality development. This will give us the most comprehensive explanations of various forms of racism, and help us to work out a range of strategies to deal with them.

Sociological work of this kind has not developed in isolation, but in response to the increasing salience of organised racism and racist violence in many countries during the current period of restructuring. It also reflects the experience of black and minority movements, which have found that racist structures and attitudes exist in working class organisations, such as trade unions and political parties, and have therefore not been willing to accept that racism is simply a ruling class device. Racism and class are not reducible to one another. Hence the emphasis on understanding the complex historical processes which have led to the entrenchment of racism in Western cultures.

VI. Global Restructuring and Racism

In Section IV above, evidence was presented which indicated that racism has grown in strength in recent years, and has become more widespread. It can no longer be seen as primarily a problem of behaviour of white dominant groups towards non-white immigrants or colonised peoples. Rather it concerns the behaviour of dominant ethnic groups towards minorities or dominated groups throughout the world. It is my contention that this shift is linked to the process of globalisation of economic, political and cultural relations which has caused major changes in the last two decades. Globalisation has led to crises in many spheres of society, including political institutions, employment, social structures, culture and national identity. This applies both in highly developed countries (HDCs) and in less developed countries (LDCs), as well as in the relations between them.

One result of rapid change has been an increase in violence both at the personal and the collective levels. The upsurge in racism is part of this trend. The task for social scientists is to explain why the insecurity and general malaise caused by rapid change

should be translated into racism, rather than into positive action to deal with the real problems of restructuring. There is no single explanation, and the factors vary in different areas, depending on local circumstances, political structures, national traditions and socio-economic conditions. A multi-faceted, interdisciplinary approach is essential. Here we only have time for some very general observations. The most obvious distinction is between the conditions which give rise to racism in HDCs, and those prevailing in LDCs.

Explaining racism in highly developed countries

The HDCs include Western Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan. Since the early 1970s, economic restructuring and increasing international cultural interchange have been experienced by many sections of the populations of these countries as a direct threat to their livelihood, social conditions, life-style and national identity. The full employment of the post-war period has been replaced by rising levels of joblessness, with a prospect of long-term or even permanent unemployment for workers lacking skills or unable to obtain retraining. Skilled workers belonging to what used to be called the 'labour aristocracy' have found their skills devalued by new technologies. At the same time there has been an erosion of welfare state provisions, leading to increasing social insecurity. Major shifts in regional investment patterns have contributed to the decline of older industrial areas, often leading to urban blight. These changes have coincided with the settlement of new ethnic minorities in the cities. Many local people have tended to perceive the newcomers as the cause of the threatening changes—an interpretation eagerly encouraged by the extreme right, but also by many mainstream politicians.

Paradoxically, disadvantaged groups of local populations share to some extent a common fate with ethnic minorities. Both are subject to the same processes of polarisation: the old relatively secure skilled working class is being eroded from both sides: a new middle class of highly-trained managers, professionals and technicians is growing, but so is a new lower class of low-skilled workers employed in casual and insecure jobs, often in the informal sector. Some members of the old skilled blue-collar working class are pushed down into the new lower class. Minorities are affected disproportionately, as are new immigrants, who can no longer find jobs in the traditional areas of migrant worker incorporation: factory and construction work. Members of these groups lead a marginalised existence and often find themselves pushed into the urban and sub-urban ghettoes of public housing projects. Here, the disadvantaged members of the majority ethnic group are face-to-face with the immigrants and minorities, whom they have come to blame for their own fate. The potential for racism is obvious, and it is indeed in such

'ghettoes of the disadvantaged' (Dubet and Lapeyronnie, 1992) that racist violence and extreme-right mobilisation are most extreme.

Moreover, social dislocation has been accompanied by a political crisis. The very changes which have affected work and life chances have also weakened the labour movement and working class cultures, which might otherwise have provided some measure of protection. The decline of working class parties and trade unions, and the erosion of local communicative networks has created the social space for the growth of racism (Wieviorka, 1991). Disadvantaged groups have found themselves without political representation in main-stream parties, which has led to a decline in confidence in democratic institutions. Many people have turned to extreme-right groups which provide a monocausal explanation for the crisis: that the nation is being undermined by immigration and minorities. Thus organised racism—often leading directly to violence—is both a psychological and a political response to processes of rapid change, which are often incomprehensible and always uncontrollable for those most affected.

This points to the need to analyse carefully the link between economic change, political ideologies and popular attitudes. The political response to restructuring in several countries has been a shift to a neo-conservative model which emphasises natural inequality, individual achievement, the need to de-regulate markets and reduce state intervention, and a return to traditional values of family and nation. The attack on the welfare state helps to create the social conditions for racism, while the ideology of neo-conservatism provides a fertile climate for blaming 'deviant' minorities for social problems, and re-asserting racial and ethnic boundaries. These themes are taken up in the media and in popular discourse, helping to create a new 'commonsense' racism. Extreme-right organisations take this ideology a step further by interpreting it as a call to violence and discrimination against minorities. They recruit urban 'poor white' youth, who are often victims of unemployment and alienation. These people—often members of sub-cultures like skinhead—seeking to overcome their own powerlessness through violence against groups with even less social power.

This analysis indicates that racism in HDCs is a result of fundamental processes of societal change, and that the policies adopted by governments have often helped to exacerbate the conditions that create racism. It follows that measures to deal with racism need to address these structural factors, as well as deal with the everyday expressions of racism. This will be discussed further below.

Explaining racism in less developed countries

To generalise on LDCs is even more difficult than on HDCs, for the concept covers over three quarters of the world's population living in a wide range of geographical regions. LDCs differ enormously in history, culture, social structure, economic situation and political institutions. However, there are some widespread common features, of which the increasing salience of racism is one. Again, my argument is that this is linked to processes of globalisation.

In the colonial period, the European rulers disrupted previous relations between ethnic groups in many ways. The territories of tribes or ethnic groups were arbitrarily amalgamated or divided. Forced labour or contract labour systems led to compulsory migrations and resettlement. Colonial powers often deliberately played off one group against another, sometimes by privileging a certain tribe in return for military or other services, sometimes by importing labour from far away (slaves or indentured workers). This led to the emergence of middleman minority groups, such as the Chinese of Southeast Asia, or the East African Indians, whose role was often resented by the majority populations. In many areas, mestizo groups developed through mixing of colonists with local populations. The result in some areas (for instance the Caribbean or Latin America) were colour-class systems. Racism played a major part in all systems of colonial rule, so that it appeared as an integral part of the exercise of power.

In the post-colonial period of nation-building, new governments tried to overcome this legacy of racism through strategies of national unity and development. However, the success of economic and social development policies was often limited in face of the deficient infrastructure and the continued domination of world trade by the HDCs. During the Cold War, the internal politics of many LDCs were dominated by the conflict between the systems. This often led to military aid (instead of development assistance), bitter internal conflicts, military coups, civil wars and intervention by outside powers. The result was economic stagnation, decline in political culture, abuse of human rights and situations which gave rise to mass refugee flows. Under these circumstances, inter-ethnic conflicts continued to play a major part in many LDCs.

The process of globalisation in recent years has transformed previous forms of racism, in many cases exacerbating them, as well as leading to new forms. One aspect of global change has been the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Bloc. The demise of the 'Second World' has contributed to the end of the 'Third World' as a political project for an alternative way of development to capitalism. The other cause of the decline in usefulness of the 'Third World' concept has been the differentiation of

former 'Third World' countries between oil-rich countries, newly-industrialising countries (NICs) and countries unable to shake off poverty. The replacement of the 'three worlds model' with the North-South divide model is a reflection of new pessimism about the chances of development, in a situation where many poorer countries are trapped in a vicious cycle of economic dependence, uncontrolled demographic growth, political instability and environmental degradation.

Those countries which have managed to achieve economic growth—especially the oil-producing countries and the NICs—have in many cases recruited migrant workers from LDCs. Contract labour systems in Arab oil countries and in some of the NICs are similar to European guest-worker systems of the past, with strong elements of discrimination and institutional racism. Migrant workers are denied civil and political rights, as well as entitlement to long-term settlement and family reunification. Many workers have been subjected to various forms of exploitation and abuse, with little chance of recourse to law. Women workers are subjected to special forms of exploitation and sexual abuse. Lack of rights for migrants often (but not always) corresponds with situations of restriction of civil and political rights for sections of the local population as well.

In countries where economic development has been slow, and even more where political upheavals have taken place, ethnic conflicts, discrimination and racism have been rife. This has taken many forms, as described in Section IV above. In a sense, the explanation is very similar to that advanced for the HDCs: in a situation of declining living standards and increasing disorder, racism has been one way of dealing with the crisis. At the informal level, people who experience social crisis without the means to address the root causes easily come to blame immigrants and minorities in their midst, as visible symbols for the problems. Governments and political movements may use propaganda against minorities as a way of mobilising popular support, thus encouraging racist attitudes and behaviour.

Again, this analysis leads to the conclusion that measures to deal with racism need to address not only day-to-day issues but also fundamental political and economic structures of society, and indeed of the international order.

Explaining racism towards indigenous peoples

Racism towards indigenous peoples in settler colonies has common features with post-colonial racism in LDCs, but also has some special features. Historical treatment of indigenous peoples in Australasia, North and South America, the Caribbean and some other regions was particularly vicious, often culminating in genocide, dispossession and

social marginalisation. In the 1960s there were some steps towards amelioration of the situation, with the granting of citizenship and the attendant formal rights to indigenous people, and the introduction of programs for political self-determination and social development. However, over the last 20 years it has become apparent that there are significant barriers to progress.

In countries like Australia and the USA, where destruction of indigenous peoples and their culture are central parts of myths of nation-building, racist attitudes are very deeply entrenched. There is no doubt that negative attitudes towards indigenous people are much stronger and more enduring than those towards immigrant groups. This means that there is considerable resistance to change, and that many of the apparent attempts to achieve improvement remain mere paper promises. At the same time, the social and educational situation of peoples who until recently were completely excluded from society cannot quickly be ameliorated through superficial programs. Indeed such programs frequently confirm the de facto exclusion and marginalisation of the groups concerned.

Indigenous peoples thus remain the victims of institutional and informal racism, and are likely to remain so until ways are found of guaranteeing adequate participation in political processes, so that the groups concerned can be empowered to achieve change for themselves.

Explaining racism in the former socialist countries

The ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia, in some parts of the former Soviet Union, and in other parts of Eastern Europe are also linked to the process of global change. Indeed the end of the Cold War is one of the most important expressions of globalisation. Nonetheless, these conflicts also have some special features which merit discussion.

One feature is the suddenness and the extreme violence of the conflicts. The most dramatic case is 'ethnic cleansing' in former Yugoslavia, which comes very close to genocide in its brutality. Some of the conflicts between and within the republics of the former Soviet Union seem equally bitter. Although there are obvious interest conflicts in the process of disintegration and reformation of states, it is hard to find a rational explanation for extreme violence between people who have, until recently, lived together fairly peacefully in one state. No doubt the answers are to be found in long histories of violent conflict before the formation of the multi-ethnic states. Nonetheless, the reappearance of the conflicts after the coming of age of new generations is hard to understand. Clearly, cultures of racism have considerable historical durability.

Another feature is that previous ethnic conflicts seemed to have been surmounted through the establishment of political systems based on universalistic rational principles and embodying many different ethnic groups. The breakdown of these systems has led to a reassertion of old forms of ethnicity or nationalism, often using traditional religious, cultural and folklorist symbols. This development appears anachronistic at a time of globalisation of economics, politics and culture, and of development of supranational regional blocs like the European Community. The explanation probably lies in the way socialist systems were imposed on the people from above and outside, with little real mass basis. The economic and political failure of these systems has left a vacuum. Hopes that this could quickly be filled by a democratic or free enterprise culture were unrealistic, for the initial effects of economic restructuring were negative for most people, leading to unemployment, social problems and a breakdown of public order. Again, we see the link between insecurity and racism, and the need for measures to restore political stability, employment and social security.

VII. Governmental and non-governmental responses

It is not the intention of this paper to examine the responses of governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to racism. However, I will suggest a very rough typology of responses. It should be stressed that the divisions between the categories of states are not rigid, and that political action can bring about change. Moreover, there are countries where racism against certain groups is commonplace, while racism against other groups is not accepted. Racism is an issue in most countries, but, clearly, the conditions for anti-racist work depend very much on state policies. In all cases, the role of NGOs is important, but it varies according to whether the government itself has racist policies, takes a laissez-faire attitude towards racism, or actively combats it.

Racist states

Most European and colonial states have pursued racist policies in the past. Some states in various parts of the world continue to do so. It is important to remember that 'scientific racism' was the accepted ideology of most European leaders until at least the Second World War. It found expression in racist laws and policies in many countries. The White Australia Policy was not abolished until the 1960s, nor were segregationist laws in the USA, nor discriminatory immigration rules in Canada. South Africa has only just began to demolish the structures of apartheid. The immigration laws of many countries—including some which are generally considered to be democracies—remain

discriminatory even today. Moreover, many countries have regulations and policies which discriminate against minorities.

In states where racist laws and policies still exist, the struggle against racism is also a struggle for fundamental changes in political structures, legislation and institutions. Those who attempt to achieve this in countries without adequate safeguards of civil liberties may themselves become victims of sanctions and even human rights abuses. In some such countries governments claim to be acting against racism, and have set up agencies with this ostensible purpose. These may have no real power and merely serve propaganda functions. Such contradictions can apply even in democratic countries: if, for instance, immigration policies are discriminatory, then anti-racist legislation may be ineffective in important respects. In such cases, there are likely to be political conflicts between minority and anti-racist organisations and the state, which may achieve change. Conflicts between different state agencies (e.g. human rights agencies and the police) are also likely.

Laissez-faire states

A second category of countries are those in which the state claims to be non-discriminatory, but actually does little or nothing to combat racism. Such states are characterised by an absence of human rights or anti-racist legislation and agencies, or by legislation and agencies so lacking in effective powers that they are unable to achieve anything. Typical of such states is the claim that there is no need for anti-racist measures because existing general laws are sufficient, and that the police has no need for any support from special agencies. Such claims may mask the continued existence of institutional discrimination of various kinds against minorities.

In such countries the role of NGOs is frequently of great importance. They may take a lead in exposing and monitoring racist violence and discrimination, and putting pressure on the authorities to act. In many cases they are able to develop public awareness of racism. In the long run they may develop political pressure to the point where the state does take action by enacting anti-racist legislation and setting up human rights or anti-racist agencies. Even then, the role of NGOs may remain crucial in encouraging the authorities to take action, as well as in providing links with minority communities, which often have little confidence in the police and other government bodies.

Anti-racist states

A state may be categorised as *anti-racist* if it has a comprehensive legal framework designed to combat discrimination and racism, and a set of institutions and agencies charged with implementing such laws. The legislation needed includes:

- laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, provision of services and in public places
- equal opportunities and affirmative action laws
- laws prohibiting racial incitement and defamation
- laws to combat racial harassment and violence
- laws and policies to combat social marginalisation of specific groups.

Necessary institutional measures include:

- human rights or anti-racism bodies designed to develop policies to facilitate implementation of anti-racist laws, to monitor racism and to provide support for people who have been victims of racism
- establishment of managerial responsibilities (possibly also special units) within generalist government agencies to ensure conformity with anti-racist laws and policies
- training and professional development measures for police and other officials to ensure that they understand and implement anti-racist policies.

Even in an anti-racist state, institutional racism cannot be ruled out altogether, for the power of racist traditions and culture is not easy to break. They may be strongly entrenched in 'professional cultures', for instance of the police and immigration services. Thus even if the political will for anti-racist laws and policies is strong, a great deal of resistance may need to be overcome within state structures, as well as in the general community. An important role therefore remains for NGOs, particularly those representative of ethnic minorities, which can form the bridge between government and community. They can have an important educational role as well as providing political initiatives to improve anti-racist activities.

VIII. Major Issues in Combating Racism

The main conclusions of this paper are:

1. Racism is a major threat to minorities, to human rights, to public order and to democratic social structures in all regions of the world. The target groups and the forms of racism vary, but share certain common features. These include:

- the stereotyping of groups on the basis of phenotypical or cultural characteristics or national origin

- the use of economic, social or political power by certain groups to legitimate the exploitation or exclusion of other groups
- the essentially violent nature of all forms of racism, which reduce people's life chances and are ultimately based on the threat of physical harm.

2. After a period of relative decline in some areas, racism is on the increase in many parts of the world today. It is no longer primarily a practice of white dominant groups towards peoples of non-European origin, but is practised by dominant groups of varying ethnic backgrounds in all regions of the world.

3. Social-scientific work in recent decades has largely overcome the racist character of previous European thinking on 'race', although this still persists in some quarters. However, 'commonsense' theories of human nature and the inevitability of conflict between ethnic groups are still highly influential in politics and popular discourse. Social-scientific analysis can provide useful guidance in the struggle against racism, as long as it:

- is interdisciplinary, linking the approaches of history, sociology, cultural studies and psychology
- is based on an understanding of the factors in social structure which give rise to racism
- includes analysis of the cultural factors which give continuity to racism even when the original causes have disappeared
- takes account of the dynamic factors of social change which lead to variations in the incidence and forms of racism.

4. Although specific causes of racism in particular places and towards particular groups vary, a general explanation for the increasing incidence of racism is to be sought in the process of globalisation, which has led to major economic, social, cultural and political transformations in recent years. Globalisation has led to unpredictable and threatening changes in many people's economic and social situation, as well as shifts in cultural and national identities. For many groups in both HDCs and LDCs the experience has been one of insecurity, disorientation and marginalisation. At the same time, neo-conservative policies in many states and increasing polarisation between rich and poor countries has made it harder to cope with the consequences of globalisation. Declining welfare for many groups has coincided with a weakening of the political institutions and cultural networks which might otherwise have provided some protection. In HDCs this has taken the form of the decline of the labour movement. In LDCs alternative models of development have become eroded as the 'Third World' has become fragmented and lost

its programmatic significance, while increasing contradictions in countries caught in a vicious cycle of poverty have exacerbated conflicts.

What is the significance of these conclusions for the struggle against racism?

To start with, they underline the need to intensify the struggle, and to realise that advances made in the past can easily be lost through inactivity. It is clear that racism is a deep-seated phenomenon, based on centuries of tradition and integrated into many cultures. Moreover, the structural and psychological factors which cause racism have taken on new intensity in the current epoch. This means that an effective anti-racist strategy cannot be restricted to dealing with the actual forms of appearance of racism. It is necessary for governments to get to grips with fundamental causes. This is a matter not for special policies and agencies, but for mainstream policies concerned with employment, social security, social justice, quality of life and the rights of citizenship.

However, such long-term policies alone are inadequate, because they do not deal with the immediate plight of people exposed to racism in their everyday lives. The need here is for governments to introduce comprehensive policies, designed to cope with all facets of institutional and informal racism. Some of the components of such policies have already been mentioned. It is here that the very important role of national institutions such as human rights commissions and anti-racist bodies is to be found. It is also crucial that, where racist violence takes on extreme forms, states should use the full strength of their police forces and legal apparatuses to enforce the law and to safeguard the rights of all residents. Ensuring that this happens is also one of the tasks of the national institutions.

Finally it should be stressed that non-governmental organisations have everywhere played a major part in the struggle against racism and will continue to do so. The most important such NGOs are the organisations of immigrants and ethnic minorities themselves, as well as anti-racist groups based on humanitarian, ethical, religious or political principles. The importance of NGOs applies in countries where the state itself has racist policies—in which case members of NGOs often run considerable risks. It applies where states take a laissez-faire attitude to racism—here NGOs have a central role in combating racism and in changing state polices. Finally it applies even in countries where the state sets out to actively combat racism. Often this readiness is itself the result of past work by NGOs. The continuing role of NGOs is to press the state to improve its policies and to implement them effectively, as well as to serve as a link between state and communities. It follows from this that one of the main tasks of national institutions is to find effective ways of working with NGOs.

To sum up: whatever the specific character of racism in a given country, there is a need for a multi-faceted approach. This should include, firstly, fundamental economic and social policies designed to achieve social justice, security and the best possible life-chances for the whole population. Secondly, governments should introduce specific anti-racist legislation, policies and agencies. Thirdly, there is a major role for active work by NGOs, and fourthly, there is a need for close cooperation between government agencies and NGOs.

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[1] The most used source is the annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* prepared by the US Department of State (referred to in the text as US DoS).

[2] Commonsense is used here in the Gramscian sense of accumulated, taken-for-granted and often contradictory sets of assumptions used by people to understand and cope with the complex world around them (compare also Miles, 1989: 60). We might also, using Bordieu's terminology, speak of a 'racist habitus'.

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